

Intervenor Testimony

Stefan Dover

Blue Granite Rate Case 2019-290-WS

January 23, 2020

RECEIVED

JAN 23 2020

PSC SC  
MAIL / DMS

This testimony reflects on the community of Fox Wood Subdivision, Fort Mill, SC where I live. It substantiates my significant grievance: that raising rates on our utilities will provide significant negative economic impact, will continue to reinforce precedence for future harmful and unnecessary inflation, and harmfully strengthens unethical and unprincipled ownership by other private equities to further drain resources immorally from communities in the State of South Carolina.

#### Economic Impact

In raising the rates by 50%, this would be a \$70 increase to monthly budgets. That's money not spent on groceries, on health related needs, on child enrichment, on religious stipulations. To allow the utility this exorbitant increase at the expense of such fundamental values should not be allowed, and the Public Service Commission must not be complicit in such an act.

Our neighborhood is not a high income locality. I for one have a limited income and know how this would affect the decisions needed to keep my household in working order. To add such an additional insane cost increase would cause me to choose whether my children can do certain school functions, or whether I could fulfil my religious obligations, or go to the doctor/buy medication.

I could only imagine what impact it would have on an elderly couple who draws social security and can't add to their monthly income in lieu of health. I for one am of age and healthy, but fear for those who can't. Who picks up their extra expense?

If I were to sell my home, how would this rate increase affect someone who wishes to purchase in our neighborhood. If given the choice they are going to choose a home where utilities cost 100% - 150% less than ours. To sell my home I would have to greatly reduce the price. In doing so, the whole neighborhood would reduce in value. If home values are reduced, which opens the door to crime and impoverished conditions, further driving the home values down.

The reason for our purchase in this neighborhood was for its quiet and safe demeanor. This rate increase jeopardizes these values, and makes us the laughing stock of most of the rest of South Carolina.

#### Future Precedence's

If we are going to allow one private equity to manage a utility, operating the utility fundamentally as a guaranteed investment at the expense of customers who have no choice, and increasing rates in an alarming manner, then what stops others from doing the same. If Blue Granite is allowed to raise our rates by 50%, what stops York Electric Co-op from raising its rates. This precedence only allows there to be further draining ~~on~~ of financial resources that should be going back into the community.

The frequency and amount of previous rate increases have already allowed for such an erroneous request. Our neighborhood already pays 50% - 100% more than the surrounding area in utilities. These other communities have other amenities added. If this unjustified increase is allowed, it also sets the precedence for other equities

to not only increase rates, but decrease return. There is an understanding for an increase as the economy grows, but there is also an expectation of goods of service with such a drastic increase. What is in return? Other local municipalities are only increasing by 10% or less and have only done so once or twice in 10 years. In 14 years, we have had 6 rate increases averaging nearly 10% per year.

It is a dangerous precedent to allow private equities masquerading as utilities to dictate the quality of life and economic expectations. We can not be expected to pay extra without the addition of services. We can not be expected to have drastic increases made and not be able to keep up with other economic duties. Our families within our community work hard at making it a pleasant place of residence. If we are cut off at the knees, we will be unable to retain the quality of life they have worked so hard to produce. In return, ultimately the utilities will suffer. No residents equal no return.